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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 1364th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 2 August 1990, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. TADESSE (Ethiopia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

QUESTION OF GUAM: REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON SMALL TERRITORIES (A/AC.109/L.1736 and Corr.1) (continued)

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the representative of the United States, the administering Power concerned.

Ms. BONEPARTH (United States of America): Mr. Chairman, let me begin by expressing the appreciation of my delegation for your efficient and effective steering of the Committee through yet another session.

The United States, as administering Power, wishes to state its objections to several of the conclusions and recommendations concerning Guam in the report of the Sub-Committee on Small Territories.

First, in paragraph 6 (5), the Sub-Committee addresses the draft Commonwealth Act and urges the administering Power to:

"give full recognition to the status and rights of the Chamorro people and, in this context, takes note of the statement of the representative of the administering Power that the cultural identity of the Chamorro people, the indigenous inhabitants of Guam, would be recognized." (A/AC.109/L.1736, para. 6 (5))

The Special Committee then goes on to note that:

"the draft Commonwealth Act provides that the Congress of the United States would recognize the inalienable right to self-determination of the Chamorro people, for which provisions would be made in the Guam Constitution." (ibid.)

I wish to clarify the views of the administering Power regarding the status of the Chamorro people. The United States Government does indeed recognize the unique cultural identity of the Chamorro people, as it recognizes the cultural identities of various ethnic, national, and other groups who make up the inhabitants of the

(Ms. Boneparth, United States)

United States Territories, and indeed of the whole United States citizenry. The United States Government, however, is constitutionally required to treat all peoples as equals under the law with equal political status. This applies to the Chamorro people, who have an inalienable right to self-determination, as do all the other inhabitants of the Territory of Guam.

Therefore, the language in the Fourth Committee resolution on Guam, adopted at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly, stating that the Fourth Committee:

> "Reaffirms the importance of continued efforts by the territorial Government, with the support of the administering Power, to promote and develop Guam's unique cultural identity;" (resolution 44/98, para. 10)

states the issue accurately and avoids the inference of any unequal treatment of the citizens of the Territory.

Second, in paragraph 6 (6) of the Sub-Committee report, the Special Committee

> "reaffirms its strong conviction that the presence of military bases and installations in the Territory could constitute a major obstacle to the implementation of the Declaration ..." (A/AC.109/L.1736, para. 6 (6))

While this language has appeared for several years in Special Committee reports and draft resolutions and in Fourth Committee resolutions, the United States finds this language not only misleading but totally irrelevant to the present situation in Guam.

(Ms. Boneparth, United States)

As I stated before the Sub-Committee this spring:

"Although the United States has joined consensus on past resolutions relating to the United States Territories before this Sub-Committee, my Government believes that these resolutions should be updated and simplified, eliminating anachronistic and inappropriate language regarding the United States' administration of its Territories."

I informed the Sub-Committee that land was in the process of being transferred from the United States Department of Defense to the Government of Guam for a sewage-treatment plant, a school and a branch of the Guam Community College. I further informed the Sub-Committee that the Department of Defense was examining the feasibility of moving the activities of the Brewer Field Naval Air Station to Anderson Air Force Base and that the Governor of Guam expressed in his State of Territory address the belief that the closure of the Naval Air Station would soon occur.

Unfortunately, the Sub-Committee report fails to mention these developments and continues to sustain the impression that the United States Government is maintaining at the same level, rather than decreasing, its military presence in Guam. We find this failure of the Sub-Committee to reflect accurately the reality highly objectionable. Should the Sub-Committee fail to incorporate up-to-date and accurate information regarding the United States military presence in Guam into its reports and draft resolutions, my Government will find it necessary to raise these objections in other forums.

Lastly, in paragraph 6 (7) of the Sub-Committee report, the Special Committee:

"urges the administering Power to continue to take all necessary measures not to involve the Territory in any offensive acts or interference against other States ..." (A/AC.109/L.1736, para. 6 (7))

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(Ms. Boneparth, United States)

My Government also finds this language highly objectionable. As I stated to the Sub-Committee previously, the Secretariat's own working paper provides no basis whatsoever for drawing any inference of the possible involvement of the Territory in offensive military acts. Nor has any information from any source been offered to allow the Special Committee to make such an inference. This anachronistic language again reflects in our view the failure of the Committee to come to grips with contemporary reality. Therefore my Government is prepared to air its views on these matters in the Fourth Committee if the Special Committee decides to forward a draft resolution on Guam containing this language.

The CHAIRMAN: If there are no comments, may I take it that the Committee adopts the report and approves the conclusions and recommendations contained therein, noting, of course, the remarks made by the administering Power?

If I hear no objection, it will be so decided.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee has thus concluded consideration of the item.

280TH AND 282ND TO 284TH REPORTS OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS, INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE (A/AC.109/L.1721, L.1723-L.1725)

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the Chairman of the Sub-Committee, Mr. Alexander Slabý of Czechoslovakia, to introduce the reports.

Mr. SLABÝ (Czechoslovakia), Chairman of the Sub-Committee on Petitions, Information and Assistance: I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the Sub-Committee, first, the 280th report of the Sub-Committee (A/AC.109/L.1721), which contains the results of consultations with the Department of Public Information and with the Division for Decolonization and Trusteeship of the Department for Special Political Questions, Regional Co-operation, Decolonization and Trusteeship.

(Mr. Slabý, Chairman,
Sub-Committee on Petitions,
Information and Assistance)

In the light of the consultations, the Sub-Committee submitted the following conclusions and recommendations for consideration and approval by the Special Committee: that it should reiterate the importance of United Nations action to effect the widest possible dissemination of true, accurate and topical information on decolonization as an instrument for furthering the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and those of the Declaration and for mobilizing world public opinion in support of the peoples of colonial Territories and their national liberation movements in their efforts to achieve self-determination, freedom and independence, and that it should also reiterate the importance it attaches to the preparation and dissemination by the Secretariat of material, studies and articles relating to decolonization problems.

It was also particularly recommended that an appeal should be addressed to the mass media to regard it as their task to contribute to the elimination of all remaining manifestations of colonialism by disseminating information on current decolonization problems and to render support to the peoples of the colonial Territories.

The delegation of Czechoslovakia expressed the reservations of its Government with regard to paragraph 49 (2) of the report.

I commend the report for adoption by the Special Committee.

The Sub-Committee continued this year to hold consultations with representatives of non-governmental organizations on the dissemination of information on decolonization. This year the Sub-Committee held consultations with three non-governmental organizations based in the United States. They expressed their views on the problems of colonialism and specific colonial issues and gave information on some aspects of the situation in a number of remaining colonial Territories.

(Mr. Slabý, Chairman,
Sub-Committee on Petitions,
Information and Assistance)

On the basis of the consultations with non-governmental organizations, the Sub-Committee recommended, among other things, that the Special Committee should encourage the non-governmental organizations active in the field of decolonization to continue and intensify their campaign against colonialism in all its forms and manifestations and intensify their support for all colonial peoples, including those in southern Africa, and for internationally recognized national liberation movements. The Special Committee should further encourage the non-governmental organizations to continue and intensify their campaign against the evils and dangers of colonialism in all its forms and manifestations.

The Sub-Committee expressed its appreciation to those non-governmental organizations that appeared before it for their activities in the promotion of the ideals of decolonization and for their contribution to its work.

The Sub-Committee adopted the 282nd report (A/AC.109/L.1723) by consensus, and I commend it for adoption by the Special Committee.

The Sub-Committee continued this year to hold consultations with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa. The assistance provided by the international community to all colonial peoples and their national liberation movements, the role of the United Nations in the struggle for decolonization, as well as ways and means of effective dissemination of information on decolonization, were among the subjects and topics of the consultations this year. The views of the representatives of OAU and ANC are summarized in the 283rd report of the Sub-Committee (A/AC.109/L.1724).

On the basis of the consultations, and within the framework of the mandate of the Special Committee, the Sub-Committee recommended, among other things, that the Special Committee should commend the contribution of OAU to the complete and speedy

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eradication of colonialism, racism and apartheid, the support OAU gives to the peoples of southern Africa and their national liberation movements and the attention it devotes to the struggle of independent States in southern Africa against aggression, subversion, destabilization and all forms of colonial or neo-colonial pressures by the Pretoria régime.

All States, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations active in the field of decolonization should be urged to increase their support for the peoples of South Africa struggling for freedom and human rights.

I commend for approval the 283rd report, which was adopted in the Sub-Committee by consensus.

(Mr. Slabý, Chairman,
Sub-Committee on Petitions,
Information and Assistance)

Lastly, I have the honour to introduce the 284th report of the Sub-Committee, document A/AC.109/L.1725, devoted to the question of the "Examination of the progress made in the carrying into effect of the Plan of Action for the Full Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples".

That question was touched upon during the discussion of practically all the items on the Sub-Committee's agenda. In particular, many of the specialized agencies and other international institutions associated with the United Nations, as well as non-governmental organizations which participated in this year's discussions with the Sub-Committee, expressed their strong support for implementing the Plan of Action and made known the concrete activities undertaken by them in accordance with the aims of that Plan.

The Sub-Committee, taking into account the fact that the General Assembly, by its resolution 43/47 of 22 November 1988, had declared the period 1990-2000 as the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, recommended that the Special Committee should request the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session a report that adopts an action plan aimed at ushering in the twenty-first century, a world free of colonialism.

I commend for approval the 284th report, which was adopted by the Sub-Committee by consensus.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the Chairman of the Sub-Committee for his introductory remarks and for having brought the work of the Sub-Committee to a successful conclusion. I wish also to thank all the members of the Sub-Committee for their constructive contributions to the Sub-Committee's work.

Mr. MJAALAND (Norway): Mr. Chairman, you proceeded at a faster pace than we expected on these reports, and, as you know, we normally have reservations with regard to several of them. I would therefore ask you to allow us a few minutes to prepare our remarks.

The CHAIRMAN: Since a member of the Committee has asked for time to prepare his remarks, I suggest that we should, with the concurrence of the members of the Committee, proceed to the next item and return to this item later.

THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (continued)

Reports of the regional seminars held in Vanuatu from 9 to 11 May (A/AC.109/1040) and in Barbados from 19 to 21 June 1990 (A/AC.109/1043)

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to draw the attention of members to the reports of the seminars held at Vanuatu and Barbados, contained in documents A/AC.109/1040 and 1043, respectively. In my opening statement on this item at our preceding meeting, I gave a general overview of the two seminars. The reports contain inter alia the proceedings of the seminars and a summary of statements that include the major views expressed by the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories participating in those seminars. In this context, I wish to draw the attention of members to the "Summary of Discussions", contained in each seminar report, which reflects those views. The reports also contain the statements made at the opening meetings of the seminars by the Prime Ministers of Vanuatu and Barbados.

To begin the general debate on this item, I call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. ZEINELDDIN (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, I should like to express my congratulations to the Chairman and the members of the Committee on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. I wish on this occasion that our

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Committee could achieve tangible results in discharging its responsibilities. I am convinced, Sir, that under your capable chairmanship, the Committee will succeed in attaining this goal. I should also like to take this opportunity to express my delegation's gratitude to the chairmen of the Sub-Committee on Small Territories and the Sub-Committee on Petitions, Information and Assistance for skilfully discharging their responsibilities.

The adoption 30 years ago of the Declaration by the General Assembly increased the hopes of the people of Non-Self-Governing Territories that some day they could gain independence and rule their own countries. Since that time there have been many developments throughout the world, including those Territories. About 60 former Non-Self-Governing Territories, inhabited by more than 80 million people, have attained independence. As many as 53 of those former Non-Self-Governing Territories have been admitted to the United Nations, the latest being Namibia. Other reassuring developments in this decade include a new initiative to settle the question of Western Sahara - namely, Security Council resolution 658 (1990), which supports the Secretary-General's plan and the time-frame for its implementation - the peaceful trends in the resolution of the question of New Caledonia and the commencement of talks on the question of the Falkland Islands by the parties concerned. Those developments usher in a world free of colonialism and bring us closer to the achievement of desirable results for the peoples of those Territories.

The eradication of apartheid is in sight. After more than 27 years since the adoption of the first United Nations resolution on economic sanctions against South Africa and after numerous efforts in the United Nations and other international forums to eradicate racial discrimination, a consensus declaration on apartheid, setting out guidelines for a negotiated settlement, was adopted at the sixteenth special session of the General Assembly. While we hope that the negotiations

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between the African National Congress and the South African Government will continue, we believe that those negotiations should ultimately lead to the release of all political prisoners and the return of those in exile. Such action could facilitate the commencement of formal constitutional talks on ending apartheid and granting political rights to the black majority.

Despite these developments, there is still much work to be done. We have not completely fulfilled our mandate. At its forty-third session, the General Assembly proclaimed the years 1990-2000 as the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. That proclamation places a heavy burden on our shoulders. The active participation of members in the two regional seminars held on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration of the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and the hard work done during this year by the two Sub-Committees of the Committee of 24 reflect the determination of the international community to eradicate colonialism. Obviously, the readiness and commitment of the international community, and particularly of the Special Committee of 24, to eradicate colonialism, represent a rejection of the vain argument of some administering Powers that colonialism has ended.

The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the end of the cold war and the reduction of tension between East and West must play a positive role in expediting the decolonization process. Under no circumstances must the termination of the cold war be brought about at the expense of the independence of colonial Territories.

My delegation once again reiterates the importance of sending visiting missions to investigate the latest situation in those Territories and to ascertain the views of their inhabitants on the question of their self-determination.

Mr. BERGH JOHANSEN (Norway): Mr. Chairman, allow me at the outset to say how pleased my delegation is to see you preside during this resumed session of the Special Committee. I am confident that your diplomatic skills and competence will greatly assist us in making further progress towards decolonization. I should also like to assure you and other members of the Committee of the continued full co-operation of my delegation.

By resolution 44/100 of 11 December 1989, the General Assembly, inter alia, endorsed the Programme of Activities in observance of the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Furthermore, the Assembly requested the Special Committee to organize two regional seminars in 1990 on the subject of decolonization. The regional seminars were subsequently held in Vanuatu from 9 to 11 May and in Barbados from 19 to 21 June this year.

In the guidelines and rules of procedure for the seminars contained in document A/AC.109/1022, the major purpose of the seminars was reflected as follows:

> "The Special Committee strongly believes that these seminars will provide the basis for a comprehensive review of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. It further believes that contributions from participants will help it to chart a more effective course for its work with regard to the speedy implementation of the Declaration in those Territories."

In the view of this delegation, which had the privilege of attending both seminars, the proceedings during the seminars and the final reports testify that the overall objectives just related were, by and large, achieved. Thus, the reports focus on concrete, practical and workable measures to ensure the enjoyment by all peoples of their right to self-determination in its political, economic and social aspects. This was to no small extent a result of the constructive spirit

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which prevailed during the deliberations at the seminars and to which members of this Committee, under your able guidance, Mr. Chairman, contributed in full measure.

Instead of emphasizing highly sensitive and contentious issues, the seminars highlighted the fundamental principles of decolonization as embodied in the Charter of the United Nations and contained in General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV). On this basis, a number of specific recommendations were presented by participants and later included in the reports. They included suggestions as diverse as: the undertaking of an extensive study of the remaining Territories on the Special Committee's list; the strengthening of information programmes for the peoples of the Territories; membership in regional and subregional economic organizations; the socio-economic advancement of the Territories; and environmental threats and assistance in cases of environmental emergencies.

My delegation has repeatedly advocated a pragmatic approach of this kind as the most feasible means of enhancing the cause of decolonization. In our view, the seminars and the reports emanating from them represented a useful stepping-stone in this direction. Yesterday, we announced an initiative in the form of a new draft resolution intended to extend the process into this Committee.

What has so far been informally presented to members of the Special Committee by my delegation is a consolidated draft resolution covering 10 of the territories on the list of the Sub-Committee on Small Territories. The draft is basically a compilation of well-known and generally recognized principles concerning decolonization which today appear in the reports and resolutions on each of the individual 10 Territories.

Our intention would be to seek the support of members for the adoption of the draft resolution during this resumed session of the Special Committee in addition to the reports that we have already adopted on the individual Territories. Those reports would remain as adopted.

(Mr. Bergh Johansen, Norway)

Furthermore, we propose that the Committee should decide to transmit the consolidated resolution to the General Assembly, on the understanding that the consolidated resolution will replace the resolutions on each of the 10 individual Territories. If this procedure is acceptable, the Special Committee would adopt 10 reports and one resolution on this issue, whereas the General Assembly would confine itself to one resolution. There will, however, be an organic link between the consolidated resolution and the 10 reports, in the sense that the General Assembly would approve the relevant chapters of the report of the Special Committee. This is a procedure well known from other fields of United Nations activity and in no way diminishes the importance of the reports. I should also like to reiterate that the consideration of the Sub-Committee's reports by the Special Committee will remain as it is today.

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We hope that we shall thus be able to rationalize the work of the General Assembly through a streamlining of our recommendations.

Recent international developments seem to favour a new approach. In addition to the successive decolonization of large territories over the last decades, most recently exemplified by Namibia's accession to independence, the world has lately witnessed important improvements in the international political climate. We believe that now is the right time to embark on constructive rationalization efforts.

Our ultimate objective is to enhance the effectiveness of the Special Committee and thereby promote progress towards the full exercise of the right to self-determination in all Non-Self-Governing Territories.

We think that the Committee should initiate change, for otherwise it will run the risk of becoming less relevant and being bypassed by events. We need rationalization instead of repetition, co-operation instead of confrontation and pragmatism instead of politicization.

I look forward to the reactions of members to our proposal and assure you that we are prepared to enter into consultations with all delegations with an open mind and in a constructive spirit.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Norway. I think this statement included two parts, one part related to the seminars, which we can proceed with, and the other part related to the new proposal, which I think was agreed upon yesterday. At a later stage we will consider this proposal, as was suggested, to ascertain the reactions of members.

Mr. BYKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The Soviet delegation has carefully studied the documents drawn up by the Secretariat on this agenda item. Those documents generally are fairly comprehensive and useful. The Soviet delegation would also like to express its

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thanks to the Sub-Committee on Small Territories and to the Sub-Committee on Petitions, Information and Assistance for the valuable work they have done.

The overcoming of the remnants of the cold war, the transition from fruitless confrontation to dialogue, co-operation and interaction in the world arena and the growing efforts towards democratization and a more humane approach in international relations on the basis of new political thinking have opened up new possibilities for solving the global problems of the twentieth century, which is now drawing to a close. These include the problem of eliminating the vestiges of colonialism.

The United Nations - including in particular the Special Committee - has done much to help solve the problem of decolonization. This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations of the historic Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which served as a powerful stimulus for the liberation of millions of people from colonial dependence. Dozens of new independent States have emerged on the world scene.

An outstanding recent event was the attainment of independence by Namibia, which has become a full-fledged Member of the United Nations. The importance of the Declaration and its subsequent implementation have been convincingly emphasized in the reports on the regional seminars held recently in Vanuatu and Barbados in observance of the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. We view these events, held under the auspices of the Special Committee, as very useful and significant.

The advances made in promoting the liberation of colonial countries and peoples are generally recognized, but, as pointed out in many statements made in the Special Committee, the purposes of the Declaration have not yet been completely attained. There are still about a score of colonial Territories whose peoples have

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yet to realize their inalienable right to self-determination. There must be further united efforts by all States, active and concerned involvement on their part, a desire to find a mutually acceptable solution in the interests of the colonial peoples, respect for those peoples' right to freedom of choice, a multiplicity of paths and forms of social and political development, and a universal guarantee of human rights. We hope that this session of the Special Committee, marking the beginning of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, will be distinguished by the adoption of constructive solutions which will be effective in promoting that end.

The Special Committee should, of course, focus its efforts on finding constructive and generally acceptable solutions of a practical nature, ways and means that would promote to the maximum extent possible the early and total implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

The Soviet Union, one of the countries that initiated the efforts for the adoption of the Declaration, has consistently advocated its early and total implementation, and we maintain unswerving solidarity with peoples struggling for their liberation from colonial dependency and support for the right of peoples to self-determination and independence, in conformity with the Declaration. In the Special Committee, the Soviet delegation has supported the conclusions and recommendations made by the Sub-Committee on Small Territories, and I should like to draw attention to the important work done by the Sub-Committee in preparing them. It is important that the solutions proposed by the Sub-Committee were the result of joint efforts by all its members. For that reason, the Special Committee

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endorsed them by consensus as well. It is our view that this approach should be strengthened and further developed to attain the purposes set forth in the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. For its part, the Soviet delegation is prepared to make every effort in that direction.

Mr. LU Yongshou (China) (interpretation from Chinese): Mr. Chairman, the Chinese delegation is extremely pleased that you are presiding over this meeting. We are confident that under your leadership our work will be crowned with success. The Chinese delegation appreciates the efforts made by the Sub-Committee on Small Territories.

This year is the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. In conformity with resolutions of the General Assembly, two seminars were conducted, in Vanuatu and Barbados. The Chinese delegation took part in the seminar in Barbados. At the seminars, in which statements were made by representatives of the Territories, the specialized agencies and experts, the members achieved a consensus. This document is both important and useful. It will have a positive effect on the decolonization process in the Territories. The Chinese delegation is grateful for the efforts made by all the participants in the seminar and by the Secretariat.

The Chinese Government has always supported the struggle waged by the people of the colonial countries and the Non-Self-Governing Territories. We support their struggle for freedom, independence and self-determination. The Chinese delegation will continue its efforts in this regard.

Mr. THOMSON (Fiji): I wish to refer to the report (document A/AC.109/1040) on the regional seminar held at Port Vila, Vanuatu. I had the privilege of participating in that seminar, and it is no exaggeration to say that the seminar was an eye-opener for many people who had held the view that it was not worth while. It obviously provided a very valuable mechanism for the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Pacific to express their views and to interact with the members of the Special Committee and other personalities who are active in the field of decolonization.

(Mr. Thomson, Fiji)

At the same time it made possible a clearer focus on the issues involved in the decolonization of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Pacific for all those involved, and it also provided a more relevant and realistic set of ideas to serve as a basis for guidelines for the future work of the Special Committee. I think that the thirtieth anniversary which we are celebrating this year is a good opportunity to reflect on the guidelines that should operate for the future, because we live in changing times and the outcome of both the Port Vila seminar and the Barbados seminar should set the stage for rethinking some of the ways that the Special Committee has been looking at its work, in order to maintain relevance for the future.

Lastly, I wish to thank the Secretariat staff for their hard work at Port Vila, where they so ably organized and serviced the seminar and contributed much to its success. Similarly, I wish to thank the Government of Vanuatu for hosting the seminar and for the warm hospitality given to the seminar and its participants. I also wish to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your very able and skilful conduct of the seminar in Port Vila without which it would not have been as successful as it was.

Mr. SLABÝ (Czechoslovakia): The Czechoslovak delegation welcomes the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. The reason is obvious: it is an occasion to celebrate, and it is also an occasion to think of future work.

The Czechoslovak delegation shares in many aspects the evaluations of the seminars as contained in documents A/AC.109/1040 and A/AC.109/1043. Unfortunately those documents were distributed very late. Nevertheless, it is our opinion that several ideas that were heard at the seminars deserved attention, as well as a sober and businesslike analysis, from the entire Committee of 24, its Bureau and its secretariat.

(Mr. Slabý, Czechoslovakia)

In a number of statements, proposals were made concerning how to proceed further not only in the Committee of 24 but also in the entire United Nations system at present and during the follow-up period, at a time when only a few so-called small Territories will remain on the agenda for decolonization.

Apart from the justified appreciation of the activities of the United Nations and of this Committee in the field of decolonization, some objections or reservations, or at least recommendations which may help us to proceed further in the field of decolonization, could be felt; we should also deal with those, and perhaps primarily with those. We are aware of the fact that this was not accurately reflected in the report of the seminar in Barbados. Allusions to increasing the effectiveness of the Committee's work may not be quite to the liking of some members, not even to that of the Czechoslovak delegation or of Sub-Committee officers, but we believe that they are necessary.

My delegation feels that such impulses might help to activate the work of the Committee before the Committee becomes entirely useless. This might help the Committee to go beyond the stagnant waters of a constant repetition of reports that do not lead to new results and draft resolutions that offer no new solutions and, moreover, contain language of the past cold war. Consequently, the thirtieth anniversary is a great opportunity for the Committee to reflect, and I am afraid it will be the last one. That is another reason why my delegation so cordially welcomes the thirtieth anniversary.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any comments? If there are none at this stage, we shall continue to consider this item at our next meeting in order to give an opportunity to speakers who have expressed their wish to participate in the debate.

280th AND 282nd TO 284th REPORTS OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS, INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE (A/AC.109/L.1721, L.1723-L.1725) (continued)

The CHAIRMAN: May I take it now that Norway is ready to make its observations on the items related to the Sub-Committee on Petitions, Information and Assistance?

Mr. MJAALAND (Norway): Let me first apologize for not being sufficiently alert at the previous stage of our proceedings. As I understand it, we adopted the 280th report on the question of dissemination, and at that stage you asked whether there were any comments. If that is correct, may I make my comments?

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think it was adopted. I had asked whether there were any comments beginning with the 280th report, so you can start with the 280th report, if you have any comments on that, and continue with the other reports.

Mr. MJAALAND (Norway): We have a few observations relating to the 280th report of the Sub-Committee. Although my delegation generally favours the main thrust of the draft, it still contains certain elements that we differ with. Most notably, my delegation would like to put on record our opposition to the arbitrary singling out of one country and a group of countries as allegedly maintaining extensive links with South Africa in diverse fields.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any further comments on this? I call on the representative of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. ANVIRE (Côte d'Ivoire) (interpretation from French): With your permission I should like to thank the Chairman of the Sub-Committee on Petitions, Information and Assistance for the report that he has submitted to us. Our delegation is pleased to note that at the end of the cold war between the two major blocs the confrontations that we customarily had heard in our Committee seem to be diminishing. This, we hope, will redound to the benefit of the populations of those Territories whose peoples are still unable to exercise their right of self-determination. In Africa we are more optimistic, because in Namibia, the last Non-Self-Governing Territory on the continent, independence was reached after the

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conclusion of the Brazzaville and New York agreements. We think that this healthy evolution in international politics is an undeniable contribution to the elimination of apartheid in South Africa.

In this context, we should like to encourage all parties that now are or later will be in a position to implement totally the negotiating process between the present South African Government and the populations that are in disadvantaged situations.

With regard to the Sub-Committee report contained in document A/AC.109/L.1722, our delegation would like to express some reservations regarding paragraph 1, which cites the names of some countries. This is a matter of principle in so far as we are concerned.

The CHAIRMAN: May I ask the representative of Côte d'Ivoire whether the reference was L.1721?

Mr. ANVIRE (Côte d'Ivoire) (interpretation from French): No; it was L.1722.

The CHAIRMAN: We are not considering document L.1722 at this stage. We are considering only document L.1721. We are just beginning with that, and we are continuing with L.1723, L.1724 and L.1725. If you wish to make an observation on document L.1722, will you hold it until the time that we consider that document?

Mr. ANVIRE (Côte d'Ivoire) (interpretation from French): I understand. I was mistaken.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any further comments on this item? If there are none, may I take it that the Committee adopts the report and endorses the conclusions and recommendations contained therein, it being understood that the reservations expressed by members will be reflected in the record of the meeting?

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: We shall now take up the 282nd report of the Sub-Committee, contained in document L.1723. Are there any comments?

Mr. MJAALAND (Norway): My delegation concurs with the view, prevalent in this draft, that non-governmental organizations are playing an important role in the decolonization process. However, as a matter of principle, we take exception to formulations in the report that may be construed as implying that the situation in South Africa is of a colonial nature.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any other comments on this item? If there are none, may I take it that the Committee adopts the report and endorses the conclusions and the recommendations contained therein, it being understood that the reservations expressed by members will be reflected in the record of the meeting?

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: We now take up the 283rd report of the Sub-Committee, contained in document L.1724. Are there any comments? If there are none, may I take it that the Committee adopts the report and endorses the conclusions and recommendations contained therein?

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any comments on the 284th report of the Sub-Committee, contained in document L.1725? If there are none, may I take it that the Committee adopts the report and endorses the conclusions and recommendations contained therein?

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: In accordance with established practice, consultations will be held in connection with the implementation of specific recommendations contained in these reports, as appropriate.

I wish once again to thank the Chairman, Mr. Alexander Slaby, and all the members of the Sub-Committee on Petitions, Information and Assistance for the efficient and effective manner in which they brought the Sub-Committee's work to a successful conclusion.

The remaining report, relating to the specialized agencies, will be introduced when the Committee takes up the item on those specialized agencies.

RATIONALIZATION OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE'S WORK

The CHAIRMAN: At this stage, I invite members of the Committee to state their reactions, if any, to the proposal of the representative of Norway.

Mr. MDEE (United Republic of Tanzania): I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for giving me the opportunity to react initially to the proposal presented here this morning by the representative of Norway.

Before doing so, Sir, allow me to say how happy I am to see you in the Chair. My delegation has more than one reason to be happy with your chairmanship; I need not discuss those, because they are well known. Suffice it to say that the diplomatic skill which you have demonstrated over the years will help the Committee arrive at solutions to the problems that come before it.

I should like to state at the outset that as a representative of a country which was once colonized - within this century - I would be the least likely person to oppose any move towards greater co-operation within the international community in solving the problems dealt with by this Committee. For that reason, I whole-heartedly welcome the Norwegian suggestion that greater co-operation rather than confrontation ought to characterize the Committee's work.

However, we are at a loss to understand the reasons presented today to persuade us to accept a change in the format that has been used over the years to

(Mr. Mdee, United Republic of Tanzania)

present the reports of the Committee. I am not certain that the changing international climate and the manner in which the Committee has presented its reports are enough in themselves to warrant regarding the Committee as being in danger of becoming irrelevant if it does not accept the proposal of the Norwegian delegation.

I do not see what there is about the manner in which we presented the previous reports that negates co-operation, unless the proposal is that the new style of presentation would eliminate the need for us to continue to negotiate the various points of view. We represent the international community. Obviously, our interests do not merge on all points. The need, therefore, to consult and continue to negotiate does exist.

Unless I misunderstood the way in which the Norwegian delegation presented its proposal, the impression given is that unless we adapt to this new proposal, we are going to end up becoming irrelevant. I should like to be told why this is the case. Short of that, I would find it extremely difficult for my delegation to go along with the proposal. The mere fact of a change in the international atmosphere in which we work does not justify completely erasing our style of work without first at least being told what was wrong with it.

As I said earlier, these are my initial reactions to the proposal, which came to us only yesterday. At some later stage, I shall seek to present my delegation's point of view much more coherently.

Mr. LAWSON (Sierra Leone): Before I state my delegation's initial reaction to the proposal of the representative of Norway, I wish to assure you, Sir, of my delegation's full co-operation in the work of the Committee and also, of course, to reiterate the warm and fraternal feelings that my delegation has for you personally, as well as the fraternal relations that exist between our countries.

(Mr. Lawson, Sierra Leone)

We have listened carefully to, and taken note of, the proposal of the representative of Norway, and we feel that it has much to recommend it. Our initial reaction is that it is necessary - indeed essential - that at some point in time we should rationalize the work of the Committee, perhaps not entirely because of the developments in the international climate but because logic itself dictates that this course of action is warranted.

We think that this is a matter which deserves careful examination, and we should welcome the eventual final formal submission of the draft proposal, which we have been led to believe will be forthcoming. But we ought perhaps to caution against an initial bias towards it - for whatever reasons such bias might arise. We believe that the proposal is transparent. We do not detect any underlying motive that might perhaps be considered improper, and it is on this basis that I think we should give it full and thorough consideration.

As I say, my delegation stands ready to consider the proposal in full when it is finally formally submitted.

Mr. MORA GODOY (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): First, Sir, I join the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania in thanking you for the work that you have done and thanking the Secretariat for the reports it has prepared at this session of the Committee.

With regard to the proposal made by the delegation of Norway, our delegation would like to state that we stand ready and are open to any kind of discussion that deals with the possible rationalization of the work of the Special Committee and the Fourth Committee or the enhancement of their efficiency.

Our delegation would also like to make its position clear. While this is a new proposal, it is not a new idea. It has existed for some time and has been circulating in the United Nations. But it is still known that, despite the

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positive results that have been achieved in the past 30 years, in this year of the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples there still remain a number of colonial Territories, which implies that the mandate of the Special Committee has as yet not come to an end. On the contrary, it must redouble its efforts in order to ensure the real eradication of colonialism throughout the world by the end of this century.

We are concerned and must remain vigilant about the potential dangers that might exist if our attempts to rationalize the work of the Special Committee and the Assembly were really to have an impact on the political importance of the exhaustive consideration of each colonial case. In recent years an effort has even been made to rationalize the work of the Fourth Committee, and it is my understanding that the General Assembly now spends only a month on the consideration of these topics.

(Mr. Mora Godoy, Cuba)

We agree that co-operation among all must be enhanced, as stated by the representative of Norway, but co-operation should not be limited to a diplomatic exercise, to the drafting of resolution texts. We must have real co-operation to solve the problem with which our Committee is mandated to deal, that is, the eradication of colonialism. And such co-operation must come chiefly from the administering Powers of those Territories; they must acknowledge more fully the right of those peoples to self-determination.

We are aware that détente between East and West and changes in the international situation have helped to create a climate more favourable to the existence of a more lasting peace. But we still have colonial problems. We think that the international situation should specifically contribute to the eradication of colonialism and promote the aspirations of all peoples, particularly the people of the third world. If that co-operation is also directed towards the South, we shall then be able to talk about true co-operation.

My delegation reserves the right to speak at a later time, when the Norwegian delegation's text is presented and to comment more specifically on its contents.

Mr. SAHOVIC (Yugoslavia): I have a brief comment to make on the proposal put forward by the representative of Norway. Mr. Chairman, like previous speakers, I should like briefly to express my delegation's satisfaction at seeing you preside again over our work.

At this stage my delegation finds a great deal of merit in the Norwegian delegation's idea. We think it is very important and necessary to do something to rationalize our work and to make it more efficient. On the other hand, we understand the concerns expressed, especially by the representatives of the United Republic of Tanzania and Cuba a few minutes ago. But we do not feel that this proposal should necessarily affect the substance of our work; on the contrary, it

(Mr. Sahovic, Yugoslavia)

might really help and make this Committee, as stated by the representative of Norway, more efficient and more effective in its work. Of course, the important element of this proposal, as our Norwegian colleague stated, is the link between the work of the Sub-Committee and the reports that the Sub-Committee will continue to consider and prepare on each of the items separately. With that understanding, we think that this idea is very good, and we are open to further discussion of this proposal.

Mr. CISTERNAS (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation would like to avail itself of this opportunity to tell you, Sir, how pleased we are at seeing you continuing to preside over our work. Your diplomatic skill and experience in these matters assure us that our work will evolve in a proper manner and that this session of the Committee will be a successful one.

My delegation has listened with close attention to the proposal made by the delegation of Norway, and we think that it has real merit. Anything that helps to rationalize our work should be examined and welcomed by the Committee. I think that we should have no fear of changes, especially when the aim is to change not the approach to our consideration of these matters but rather the way in which we embody our observations in documents to be considered by higher bodies of the Organization. We believe that the Norwegian proposal has the merit of enabling us to present proposals to those higher bodies in a proper way, while retaining the appropriate links to what we have been considering in our own proceedings, so that our proposals can be properly considered by the United Nations.

We hope that the delegation of Norway will circulate a formal document containing its proposal, in order that we may examine it more closely with a view to adopting a resolution on the subject. I wish to emphasize that, in principle, my delegation favours the views put forward by the Norwegian delegation.

Mrs. KING-ROUSSEAU (Trinidad and Tobago): At the outset, Sir, I should like to express my satisfaction and that of my delegation at seeing you in the Chair. You have conducted the proceedings of this Committee in your usual excellent and efficient manner, and I am sure that the rest of the session will be conducted in the same way.

I should like to state emphatically that at the moment my delegation is not able to express its position definitively on the text informally presented by the delegation of Norway. In any event, I do not think it is appropriate to delve into too much detail at this stage, since that proposal has not been presented formally.

(Mrs. King-Rousseau,
Trinidad and Tobago)

At this stage, I merely wish to say initially that we need to proceed very cautiously on this matter because of the possible implications of the proposal. One matter that I believe we need to look at is the composition of this body. There are 24 members; most of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories at present are small island developing countries in the Pacific or small island developing countries in the Caribbean. At the moment, if we look at the present composition of the Special Committee, there is one small island developing country from the Pacific represented in the body. All of the small island Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean are English-speaking islands. Of the 24 members, Trinidad and Tobago is the only small island English-speaking Caribbean country on the Committee. If we proceed to replace the current draft resolutions in the General Assembly with the text proposed by the representative of Norway, it would mean that we would be depriving the small countries of the Caribbean and the Pacific of the opportunity to state their views on the situation in the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Now, there is also the fact that the course of action is being proposed at a time when the United Nations has only recently given recognition to the designation of "island developing countries" as a distinct category and is examining ways to assist those countries and address their specific characteristics. In the context of the United Nations, the designation "island developing country" also refers to the dependencies. It would seem perhaps to be an inappropriate time to proceed on such a course of action when the General Assembly is looking at such issues of concern to small island developing countries as a Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, something to which the small island Non-Self-Governing Territories are highly susceptible.

(Mrs. King-Rousseau,
Trinidad and Tobago)

As I said, this is an initial reaction. My delegation is, of course, prepared to discuss the matter fully with other delegations. We have not had the opportunity to do so. As a matter of fact, we were not presented with the text by the delegation of Norway, so we have not had any discussions at all. We would have preferred to do this informally, but since we were asked for initial comments, I decided to speak.

There are, of course, other implications of this proposal. I cannot speak for the seminar in Vanuatu, but at the seminar in Barbados great interest in the work of the Committee was demonstrated by some of the Non-Self-Governing Territories represented. It seems a little odd to propose this course of action at a time when there seems to be increasing interest not just in the work of the Special Committee but in its work vis-à-vis the rest of the United Nations. I think that is another thing that we have to look at.

All I can say at this time is that, because of the many implications of this proposal, we have to proceed cautiously. We have to be open to each other's suggestions because we have to remember why we are here and why the Committee was established. We are to look after the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. That should be our foremost concern.

In conclusion, I wish to say that the proposal that has been circulated informally is not the only course of action that could be followed in order to rationalize the Committee's work. I suggest that together, in a non-confrontational manner and with the flexibility that has been demonstrated by delegations in past years - and this year, for instance, in the Sub-Committee that considers these Territories - we should be able to devise some formula for attaining the objective that we all seek and have been seeking over the years. In

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Trinidad and Tobago)

this year of the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration, we also have to remember that the implications of a proposal like this should be considered very carefully.

Mr. DIARRA (Mali) (interpretation from French): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on the occasion of the resumption of the Committee's work. Your qualities as a diplomat convince my delegation that we will be able to achieve consensus on the items on our agenda.

I should like to refer to the omnibus draft resolution introduced by the Norwegian delegation. My delegation duly appreciates the motivations leading to the introduction of this resolution. We understand that this action is part of the efforts to rationalize the work of the Committee. We are also appreciative of the other arguments in favour of the draft resolution. Those arguments are noble and just: the reduction of tension in international relations and the improvement of relations between blocs.

My basic concerns are to take into account the identity of each Territory. Up to the present time, in fact, the multiplicity of resolutions has made it possible to bring out the particular features of each and every Territory, as well as the concerns specific to their inhabitants. My delegation would like to be reassured that that identity will be safeguarded, be it in the reports submitted to us, which should then be presented in their legal value, or in any other document.

There are some other details that should be discussed within the context of the draft resolution. But in any event, my delegation would be open to the proposal, and we shall consult with all other delegations to ensure that the concerns I have mentioned are covered.

Mr. SLABÝ (Czechoslovakia) (Chairman of the Sub-Committee on Petitions, Information and Assistance): I should like to make some comments on the reports of the Sub-Committee on Petitions, Information and Assistance. The arguments I shall

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be talking about can be justly seen as arguments in favour of the proposal by Norway.

The reports which the Sub-Committee on Petitions, Information and Assistance submits to the Committee of 24 may well reflect the view of most Sub-Committee members. However, the delegation of Czechoslovakia is of the opinion that they do not reflect quite realistically the situation emerging in the field of decolonization at present and the climate in today's world.

(Mr. Slabý, Chairman,
Sub-Committee on Petitions,
Information and Assistance)

It is not easy for me - as the Chairman of the Sub-Committee, as the person who prepared the Sub-Committee's draft reports for its consideration and who introduced the Sub-Committee's reports to the Committee on its behalf - to say this, but we are convinced that in many cases the draft resolutions are inadequate. They are so inadequate that in two cases my delegation had no choice but to express its formal reservations. The texts not only are much too long and go into unnecessary detail, but also deal with subjects that fall under other agenda items, reports and draft resolutions of this body and other bodies. Why must the same postulates be repeated in each draft resolution that concerns decolonization, even remotely? Moreover, why must they be repeated every year?

The Czechoslovak delegation is not casting any doubts whatsoever on the legitimacy of the struggle of colonial peoples to exercise their right to self-determination and independence. My delegation fully agrees that the United Nations system must give all moral and material assistance to the peoples of the colonial Territories, including those of South Africa, of the national liberation movements and of other internationally recognized liberation movements. But is there really any need for these sentences, among many similar ones, to be repeated - with more or less, and rather less, extensive modifications - in practically each of the reports? Indeed, is there anyone who doubts their validity? And, if so, is their constant, monotonous repetition likely to convince possible doubters? The assumption that the truth becomes reality when it is repeated 100 times is as improbable as the assumption that a lie repeated 100 times becomes the truth.

Everyone here has had the occasion to mention this year that my delegation has been constantly striving to increase the effectiveness of the work of the

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Committee of 24. We assure the Committee that - if the General Assembly and our Government decide to maintain our seat in the Committee - the steps we take will be focused more and more on the achievement of that goal.

In that connection I should like to revert to the proposed omnibus resolution. We welcome this idea, and we find it valuable as an indication of the possible direction in which the Sub-Committee on Petitions, Information and Assistance might proceed in future, or the way in which the consideration of items on the Sub-Committee's agenda might be completed. Perhaps this is only an idea and not a proposal for the time being, but only one report on all the items on the agenda of the Sub-Committee on Petitions, Information and Assistance might be sufficient.

Mr. ANVIRE (Côte d'Ivoire) (interpretation from French): I should like to say a few words about the question raised by the Chairman.

First, when this idea was circulating among members of the Committee I had the impression that the proposal of the delegation of Norway was already in the form of a written text. But when the representative of Norway introduced the proposal, it turned out that he was doing so only orally.

We have no formal objection to this idea, because we think it refers to resolutions, which, generally speaking, are a matter of consensus among delegations in the Committee of 24.

Since the General Assembly has encouraged delegations to rationalize the work of the various organs, we believe that this idea deserves our consideration.

For its part, my delegation supports the proposal - although, as I have said, we had thought that a written text would be introduced by the delegation of Norway and that we could examine it. That has not been the case, but this does not

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prevent us from saying that we are in favour of the idea and are prepared to discuss it with other delegations in order to get a clearer notion of how things stand.

The CHAIRMAN: I think that the mixed initial reactions to this proposal indicate that it is in fact a new proposal with fundamentally different ideas that need to be carefully examined - as speakers have suggested - for all their implications not merely for the rationalization of our work but also in regard to the focus that the Committee places on various items, Territories and resolutions.

Hence, I think that these initial reactions indicate that we should continue the informal consultations in order to examine thoroughly the proposal's implications. When the time is ripe to consider the proposal formally, we can again take up this matter. Would the Committee agree to that course of action at this stage?

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: I have been asked to remind members of the Committee of the symbols of the documents in which the reports of the seminars are contained. These symbols are: A/AC.109/1040 and A/AC.109/1043.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.